

were compelled to rest for two hours at the beautifully-situated village of Toogh, evening was coming on with a gray sky and a lurid sunset before we left the Eahwan plain, after which we had a ride of more than three hours down the wild and stony Bitlis valley before we reached our destination. If I had made this march in spring, when herbage and flowers drape the nakedness of the rocky and gravelly mountains and precipices, it would not have made such an impression upon me as it did, but seeing the apparently endless valley for ever winding and falling to the south, with two bars of lurid light for ever lying across what never proved to be its opening, and the higher peaks rising snow-crested into a dark and ominous-looking sky, I think it one of the weirdest and wildest rides I ever took.

The infant Tigris is rapidly augmented by a number of streams and torrents. The descent was like taking leave of the bright upper world to go down into some nether region, from which there would be no exit. The valley, at times narrowing into a ravine, is hemmed in by sterile mountains, so steep as not to afford sites for villages. There are parapetless ancient arches of stone, flung across torrents which have carved hideous pathways for themselves through hideous rocks, scorise, and other signs of volcanic action, rough gulches, with narrow paths hanging on their sides, and in spite of many climbs upwards the course is on the whole downwards.

Darkness settled upon the valley long

before lights,
in what looked like infinite depths, and
straggling up
remarkable heights, trees, stone walls, and
such steep
ups and downs that it felt as if the horses
were going to
topple over precipices, denoted that we had
entered Bitlis.
Then came a narrow gateway, a flagged
courtyard choked
with mules and men, a high house with
heavily-barred
windows, a steep outside stair, and at the top
sweet faces